

FCOA and COA Board interview highlights

7 COA board members interviewed

Focus group with Friends of Council on Aging (8 participants)

Strengths of Senior Center

- COA director
 - Ability to get things done, including set of interns she directs
 - Network into the community
 - Strong advocate for seniors
- Ability of staff to solve problems
- Great resource to seniors is area to address wide range of needs
- Dedicated board who cares a lot
- Accessibility – always open and always there
- Strong set of programming
- Greenleaf program – Current capacity 16
- Provides a space for seniors to go during the day
- Help is there to help people stay in their homes
- After-school program
- Good job of getting interns
- Broad base of programs that meet many needs of seniors
- Beautiful building; always clean

Challenges of Senior Center

- COA director has all the connections to get things done; what is needed in replacement
- Senior population and needs are growing – how do we meet those growing needs
- More efficient, better use of space in the Center
- Not enough space
- Need to raise more money
- More needs than can be met in the community
- Front desk needs to be regularly staffed and be more welcoming
- How to reach out to seniors and community and communicate with them
- People don't know about us in community
- More community outreach needed; communication of services available
- More welcoming entrance and place for people to hang out; place feels very institutional and less homey
- Some prefer old center to new one
- Small staff

Suggested goals

- Develop better use of space
- Look at what other Centers are doing (e.g. Newburyport)
- Build volunteer base; Train volunteers to run programs
- Increase revenue, fundraising
- Stronger partnerships with other community organizations (e.g. ONT, churches)
- Expand Greenleaf
- Addressing more healthcare needs
- Coordinate/build the friendly visitor program
- Engage/involve younger seniors